



When Commitments Compete with Learning: Exploring Academic Engagement among Highly Involved Students

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ABSTRACT

The research explores the relationship between students' involvement in campus life and their academic engagement, with particular attention to the effects of managing multiple commitments. Participation in clubs, organizations, and other university activities can contribute to students' connection with campus life, yet extensive involvement may also place demands on time, attention, and academic responsibilities. Data were collected from 113 students enrolled at a public university and a private religiously affiliated university. Participants completed measures assessing experiences of excessive involvement and academic engagement in higher education. The findings indicated satisfactory internal consistency for the instruments used in the study. The analysis further showed a negative association between feelings of excessive involvement and academic engagement, suggesting that students who experienced greater difficulty managing their commitments tended to report lower levels of academic engagement. Differences between the two institutional groups were also observed, with students from the private religiously affiliated university reporting comparatively higher engagement. The findings highlight the importance of maintaining a manageable balance between campus participation and academic responsibilities.

KEYWORDS: Student Involvement; Academic Engagement; Campus Participation; Student Commitments; Higher Education; University Students; Extracurricular Activities; Academic Responsibilities; Student Experiences.

INTRODUCTION

University students are expected to manage academic responsibilities while also becoming part of the wider campus community. Participation in student organizations, athletics, volunteer programs, professional activities, and social events can provide opportunities for personal growth and connection with others. Such experiences are often encouraged because active participation can contribute to students' adjustment to university life. However, being active in campus life and being academically engaged are not necessarily the same experience.

Student involvement is generally reflected in the activities and effort students devote to their university experience, whereas academic engagement concerns their psychological connection with learning. A student may participate in numerous activities and still struggle to concentrate on coursework. When several commitments compete for limited time and energy, academic responsibilities may become more difficult to manage. This raises an important question about whether greater participation is always beneficial or

whether excessive commitments can eventually interfere with student's academic experiences.

The present research addresses this issue by considering the relationship between extensive student participation and academic engagement. The study considers whether moderate participation can support students' academic experiences while excessive commitments may create difficulties in managing academic and personal responsibilities.

Student participation encompasses the physical and psychological energy students devote to their university experience [1]. It can include classroom activities, studying, athletics, student organizations, professional development, volunteering, and other forms of campus participation. The nature of participation varies considerably among students. Some may concentrate heavily on one activity, while others divide their time among several organizations and responsibilities.

Participation can be identified through a range of observable behaviours. Class attendance, involvement in classroom

discussions, preparation for examinations, completion of assignments, and use of academic resources represent participation within the academic setting. Outside the classroom, students may demonstrate participation through membership in organizations, attendance at campus events, leadership activities, and informal interaction with peers and faculty [2].

Student participation also involves personal experiences that are less easily observed. Through regular interaction with the institution, students may develop stronger feelings of belonging, greater identification with university life, and a closer connection with members of the campus community. Thus, participation involves both students' activities and the meaning they attach to their university experience.

Individual circumstances can also influence participation. Financial responsibilities, transportation difficulties, personal characteristics, employment, and family obligations may affect the extent to which students can participate. Therefore, differences in participation should not automatically be interpreted as differences in motivation or commitment.

Benefits of Participation

Participation in university life has been associated with a variety of positive outcomes. Long-term research has linked student participation with persistence, graduation, personal development, leadership, and later success [3–7]. Campus organizations can provide students with opportunities to practice communication, teamwork, decision-making, and interpersonal skills.

Students who participate actively in campus events have also reported stronger feelings of community and more favorable perceptions of their educational experience [8]. Interaction with faculty and involvement in university activities may further contribute to student's satisfaction with their academic environment.

Participation can also support personal development. Students involved in campus activities have reported growth in autonomy, independence, and their sense of purpose [9]. Academic performance may benefit as well when students maintain a reasonable level of extracurricular participation. Participation of up to approximately 10 hours per week has been associated with improved academic performance among undergraduate students [10,11].

These findings demonstrate why universities place considerable emphasis on student participation. Nevertheless, the benefits associated with moderate involvement do not necessarily mean that students benefit from continuously increasing the number of activities they undertake. Time, attention, and energy remain limited resources. As commitments increase, students may eventually face difficulty giving adequate attention to each responsibility.

Academic Engagement

Academic engagement refers to the extent to which students invest behavioral, emotional, and cognitive resources in their learning [11]. The behavioral dimension includes attending classes, completing assignments, and taking part in academic activities. Emotional engagement involves student's interest, enjoyment, attachment, and sense of belonging within the educational environment. Cognitive engagement concerns the mental effort required to understand course material, solve problems, evaluate information, and develop knowledge.

These dimensions demonstrate why engagement cannot be measured solely by counting student activities. A student may attend classes regularly while remaining emotionally disconnected from the institution. Another student may participate actively in campus organizations but devote limited cognitive attention to coursework.

Academic engagement therefore represents a deeper connection with learning than participation alone. The distinction becomes particularly relevant for students with demanding extracurricular schedules. Extensive activity may provide social and developmental benefits, but it may also compete with the concentration and effort required for academic work.

Engagement and Learning

Academic engagement has been associated with academic achievement and successful progression through higher education [12]. Students who remain psychologically connected to their studies may be more willing to persist through difficult academic tasks and maintain consistent effort.

Research has also connected engagement with perseverance and commitment to long-term educational goals [13]. Students who continue to invest effort despite difficulties may be more likely to remain connected to coursework and progress toward graduation.

Motivation represents another important element. Undergraduate students' reasons for attending college have been associated with subsequent patterns of engagement and academic achievement [14,15]. These findings indicate that engagement is shaped by student's internal motivations, emotional experiences, and cognitive investment.

Consequently, participation should not be viewed as a direct substitute for academic engagement. Taking part in more activities may increase student's exposure to campus life, but it does not necessarily increase their psychological investment in coursework. The amount of participation may become particularly important when students have several competing commitments.

Academic Stress

The university experience can involve considerable pressure. Students may need to balance coursework with employment, financial responsibilities, social relationships, family obligations, and extracurricular activities. When these demands accumulate, students may have difficulty maintaining the energy and attention required for academic work.

Burnout is one outcome associated with prolonged academic pressure. It can involve emotional exhaustion, detachment, and a reduced sense of accomplishment. High academic demands and pressure to perform have been identified as important factors related to burnout among students [12].

Other research has considered academic preparation, study habits, study skills, attendance, motivation, and personality characteristics when examining student performance and burnout [15]. Class attendance emerged as an important predictor of academic outcomes and burnout, while several commonly assumed factors showed weaker predictive value.

The relationship between activity and academic outcomes is therefore more complex than simply encouraging students to do more. Participation can be helpful when it complements student's academic and personal development. When additional responsibilities create excessive demands, however, they may contribute to stress and interfere with academic priorities.

Excessive Participation

Although participation can be beneficial, students may reach a point at which the number and intensity of their commitments become difficult to manage. Membership in several organizations, leadership responsibilities, athletics, employment, and other activities can create competing demands. Research examining excessive involvement has associated it with stress, burnout, and difficulties in functioning [16–19].

Employment provides one example of how competing responsibilities can affect university experiences. Students who work full-time outside the institution may have less time available for campus activities and may feel less connected to their college environment. Extensive employment commitments have also been associated with increased risk of leaving college [20].

Excessive participation should not be regarded as synonymous with burnout. Burnout generally describes a more advanced psychological condition involving substantial exhaustion and reduced functioning. Excessive participation can occur earlier, when students begin to experience strain because the demands associated with their activities exceed the time and energy they can reasonably provide.

The Overinvolvement Scale was developed to assess this

type of sub-burnout stress among college students [21]. The measure considers how extensive participation may affect different areas of students' lives. Its content includes academic difficulties, social consequences, and concerns related to mental and physical well-being. The scale contains 13 items distributed across these three areas [21].

The concept of excessive participation provides a useful way to reconsider the commonly accepted assumption that more involvement is always better. Campus participation can strengthen relationships, provide developmental opportunities, and improve students' connection with university life. However, when students take on more commitments than they can effectively balance, these same activities may compete with coursework and reduce the resources available for academic engagement.

The present research examines this relationship among undergraduate students from two universities in the United States. By distinguishing participation from academic engagement, the research considers whether students experiencing greater difficulty managing their commitments also report lower levels of academic engagement. This perspective may provide a clearer understanding of the boundary between productive campus participation and participation that begins to interfere with students' academic lives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was designed to investigate the association between excessive student involvement and engagement in higher education. Emphasis was placed on academic engagement, with the expectation that greater experiences of overinvolvement would be associated with lower engagement. Data were obtained from undergraduate students enrolled at two universities in the United States. The study did not establish a priori expectations regarding differences between the two institutional samples.

Participants

University Sample 1

The first sample consisted of 83 undergraduate students enrolled at Colorado State University-Pueblo. Recruitment was carried out through lower-level psychology courses using the university's SONA research participation system. The participants included 63 women, 19 men, and one nonbinary student.

Regarding ethnicity, 45 participants identified as White, 17 as Hispanic, 4 as Black, 12 as Biracial, 1 as Indigenous, and 1 as Asian; 3 participants chose not to provide this information. Participants were between 18 and 50 years of age. The median age was 20 years, while the mean age was 21.5 years.

The sample included 28 first-year students, 12 second-year students, 22 third-year students, 19 fourth-year students, and 2 students who were not seeking a degree. Prior to

participation, all students reviewed and signed an informed consent form. Data collection took place in small groups of approximately 1–5 participants at different points during the Fall and Spring semesters of the 2023–2024 academic year. The research procedures were conducted in accordance with the requirements of the university's Institutional Review Board.

University Sample 2

The second sample comprised 30 undergraduate students from Christian Brothers University. Participants were recruited from upper-level psychology courses. The sample consisted of 21 women, 8 men, and 1 nonbinary student.

Eleven participants identified as White, 9 as Hispanic, 7 as Black, 1 as Middle Eastern, and 1 as Asian; 1 participant declined to report ethnicity. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 years, with a median age of 21 years and a mean age of 20.9 years.

With respect to academic standing, the sample included 3 first-year students, 6 second-year students, 11 third-year students, and 9 fourth-year students. Participants provided informed consent before completing the research materials. Data were collected in groups of approximately 5–10 students during the Spring 2024 semester. The study procedures followed the requirements established by the university's Institutional Review Board.

Overinvolvement Scale

The Overinvolvement Scale (OIS) was used to assess students' experiences of stress associated with extensive participation in extracurricular activities [22]. The 13-item measure considers the perceived effects of involvement across academic, social, and health-related aspects of university life.

Responses are recorded using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). Total scores can range from 13 to 65. Higher scores represent greater experiences of overinvolvement and the associated strain arising from extracurricular commitments.

Higher Education Student Engagement Scale

Academic and broader forms of student engagement were assessed using the Higher Education Student Engagement Scale (HESES) [23]. The instrument contains 28 items and evaluates five dimensions of engagement: academic, cognitive, social, affective, and beyond-class engagement.

The dimensions are scored separately. Academic engagement has a possible score range of 4–10, cognitive engagement ranges from 5–25, social engagement from 3–15, affective engagement from 4–20, and beyond-class engagement from 4–20. Higher scores indicate greater engagement within the respective dimensions.

Data Collection Procedure

Before completing the study materials, participants received

an informed consent document explaining the purpose and general requirements of the research. After consent was obtained, participants completed a demographic questionnaire. The demographic information included academic standing, full-time enrolment status, in-person enrollment status, extracurricular involvement, international student status, age, and gender [24].

Participants subsequently completed the research measures, including the Overinvolvement Scale, the Work and Well-Being Scale, and the Higher Education Student Engagement Scale. The questionnaires were administered under the conditions established for each university sample [25].

After completing the measures, participants were provided with information about the study during a debriefing session and were then released from participation.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection [26]. The research procedures were conducted under the oversight of the respective university Institutional Review Boards. Participant information was collected for research purposes in accordance with the procedures approved by the participating institutions.

RESULTS

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationships among overinvolvement, student engagement, and extracurricular participation [27]. The analysis considered the associations within the dimensions of the Overinvolvement Scale (OIS), the dimensions of the Higher Education Student Engagement Scale (HESES), and the relationships between the two measures. The number of extracurricular activities reported by participants was also examined in relation to overinvolvement and engagement. Differences between the two university samples were assessed separately using independent-samples *t*-tests [28].

Correlation Analysis

Significant positive associations were found among all three dimensions of the OIS. Academic Overinvolvement was positively related to Social Overinvolvement, $r(112) = 0.468$, $p < .001$. A positive relationship was also observed between Academic Overinvolvement and Health Overinvolvement, $r(112) = 0.459$, $p < .001$ (Table 1).

Table 1: Correlations Among Overinvolvement Dimensions.

Overinvolvement Dimensions	Academic	Social	Health
Academic	—	0.468***	0.459***
Social	0.468***	—	0.691***
Health	0.459***	0.691***	—

Note: *** $p < .001$.

The strongest association was between Social Overinvolvement and Health Overinvolvement, $r(112) = 0.691, p < .001$. These results indicate that students reporting greater difficulties related to overinvolvement in one area also tended to report difficulties in the other areas [29].

Engagement Dimensions

The relationships among the five HESES dimensions produced several significant associations [30]. Academic Engagement was positively associated with Cognitive Engagement, $r(112) = 0.352, p < .001$, and Beyond Class Engagement, $r(112) = 0.258, p < .001$.

Cognitive Engagement was positively related to Affective Engagement, $r(112) = 0.295, p < .001$. Social Engagement was associated with Beyond Class Engagement, $r(112) = 0.438, p < .001$, as well as Affective Engagement, $r(112) = 0.234, p < .01$. Affective Engagement also showed a significant positive relationship with Beyond Class Engagement, $r(112) = 0.609, p < .001$.

Several relationships were not statistically significant. Academic Engagement was not significantly associated with Social Engagement or Affective Engagement. Cognitive Engagement was likewise not significantly related to Social Engagement or Beyond Class Engagement [31].

Overinvolvement and Student Engagement

The associations between the OIS and HESES dimensions were examined to determine whether different forms of overinvolvement were related to different aspects of engagement. Most of the relationships were not statistically significant (Table 2) [32].

Two significant associations were identified. Social Overinvolvement showed a positive relationship with Beyond Class Engagement, $r(112) = 0.360, p < .001$. In contrast, Academic Overinvolvement demonstrated a significant negative relationship with Academic Engagement, $r(112) = -0.325, p < .001$ [33].

The negative association between Academic Overinvolvement and Academic Engagement indicates that students reporting greater academic strain connected with their involvement tended to report lower levels of academic engagement [34].

Extracurricular Activity and Study Measures

The number of extracurricular activities reported by

participants was also examined. Two statistically significant relationships were identified [35].

Extracurricular activity participation was positively associated with Social Overinvolvement, $r(112) = 0.332, p < .001$. Thus, students involved in a greater number of activities tended to report higher levels of social overinvolvement [36].

A positive relationship was also found between extracurricular activity participation and Beyond Class Engagement, $r(112) = 0.485, p < .001$. Students reporting greater participation in extracurricular activities also tended to report higher levels of engagement beyond formal academic activities.

Comparison Between University Samples

The two participant groups differed in institutional setting and sample size. The first group was drawn from a small public university without a religious affiliation, whereas the second group represented a small private Catholic university [37]. To reduce the imbalance between the original samples, participants from the first group were matched as closely as possible with those from the second group based on age and gender. The resulting comparison included 36 participants from the first sample and all 30 participants from the second sample [38].

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to examine differences between the groups in overinvolvement, student engagement, and extracurricular activity participation.

Differences in Overinvolvement

No statistically significant differences were found between the two samples across the three OIS dimensions [39]. The largest obtained *t* value was 1.06, which was not statistically significant. The findings suggest that the two groups reported broadly comparable levels of academic, social, and health-related overinvolvement.

Differences in Engagement

Differences were more evident for the dimensions of student engagement. Participants from the second sample reported significantly higher Cognitive Engagement than those from the first sample, $t(65) = 2.54, p < .014$. A significant difference was also observed for Social Engagement, with higher scores among participants in the second sample, $t(65) = 2.32, p < .024$ [40].

Academic Engagement and Beyond Class Engagement showed differences in the same direction but did not reach

Table 2: Correlations Between Overinvolvement and Student Engagement.

OIS Dimensions	Academic Engagement	Cognitive Engagement	Social Engagement	Affective Engagement	Beyond Class Engagement
Academic Overinvolvement	-0.325***	—	—	—	—
Social Overinvolvement	—	—	—	—	0.360***
Health Overinvolvement	—	—	—	—	—

Note: Only statistically significant correlations are presented. *** $p < .001$.

conventional statistical significance [41]. Participants from the second sample reported higher Academic Engagement, $t(65) = 1.712, p < .092$, and higher Beyond Class Engagement, $t(65) = 1.77, p < .081$.

No meaningful difference was found for Affective Engagement, $t(65) = 0.18, n.s.$

Inspection of the group means indicated that female participants in the second sample contributed substantially to the higher engagement levels observed in that group, with higher scores across the engagement dimensions compared with the other participant groups [42].

Differences in Extracurricular Participation

The two samples also differed in the number of extracurricular activities reported by students. Participants from the second sample reported significantly greater extracurricular participation than those from the first sample, $t(65) = 2.751, p < .009$ [43].

Taken together, the results indicate that the two samples did not differ significantly in reported overinvolvement, while several dimensions of engagement and the number of extracurricular activities differed between the groups (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The findings provide a clearer picture of the relationship between excessive student participation and engagement in university life. The results indicate that involvement is not a single-dimensional experience. Students may benefit from participating in campus activities, yet the demands associated with extensive participation can also create academic and social pressures. The findings are particularly relevant to understanding why simply increasing the number of activities available to students may not always produce stronger academic engagement [44].

Scale Consistency

The relationships among the three dimensions of the Overinvolvement Scale provide initial evidence that the measure captures related aspects of the same broader experience. Academic, Social, and Health Overinvolvement were all positively associated with one another. The

relationships between Academic and Social Overinvolvement and between Academic and Health Overinvolvement were moderate, while the association between Social and Health Overinvolvement was stronger [45].

This pattern suggests that difficulties associated with excessive participation may extend across different areas of students' lives. Academic pressure may occur alongside social difficulties or concerns about personal well-being rather than remaining isolated within the academic environment. The findings therefore support the continued use and further evaluation of the OIS as a measure of overinvolvement-related strain [46]. At the same time, the evidence should be considered preliminary because the scale is relatively new and requires examination across larger and more diverse student populations.

The internal relationships observed within the Higher Education Student Engagement Scale were somewhat more varied. Academic Engagement was associated with Cognitive Engagement and Beyond Class Engagement, while Cognitive Engagement was related to Affective Engagement. Social Engagement was also associated with Affective and Beyond Class Engagement, and Affective Engagement showed a relatively strong relationship with Beyond Class Engagement [47].

Not every dimension was related to every other dimension. The absence of significant relationships between some engagement components indicates that students can experience different forms of engagement independently. Academic involvement, emotional connection, social participation, and cognitive investment may therefore develop at different rates. These findings support the view that engagement is a multidimensional experience rather than a single characteristic that increases uniformly across all areas [48].

Overinvolvement and Engagement

One of the most important findings was the negative association between Academic Overinvolvement and Academic Engagement. Students who reported greater academic difficulties arising from their involvement tended

Table 3: Comparison of the Two University Samples

Measure	Sample 1: CSU-P	Sample 2: CBU	t-value	p-value
Academic Engagement	—	—	1.712	.092
Cognitive Engagement	—	—	2.540	.014
Social Engagement	—	—	2.320	.024
Affective Engagement	—	—	0.180	n.s.
Beyond Class Engagement	—	—	1.770	.081
OIS Dimensions	—	—	1.060*	n.s.
Extracurricular Activities	—	—	2.751	.009

Note: CSU-P = Colorado State University-Pueblo; CBU = Christian Brothers University; n.s. = not significant. *Largest t-value reported for the OIS comparisons.

to report lower levels of academic engagement. This result is consistent with the possibility that excessive commitments can compete directly with the attention and energy required for coursework [49].

The finding has practical implications for institutions that encourage students to participate extensively in campus activities. Student organizations, athletics, leadership programs, and other activities can contribute meaningfully to university life, but participation alone should not be treated as evidence of successful engagement. When students begin to experience their commitments as overwhelming, additional involvement may have diminishing or even unfavourable academic effects [50].

The positive association between Social Overinvolvement and Beyond Class Engagement provides a different perspective [51]. Students who reported greater social overinvolvement also reported higher levels of engagement beyond formal coursework. A similar pattern was observed between the number of extracurricular activities and Social Overinvolvement. Students participating in more activities were more likely to report social strain associated with their involvement [52].

These findings suggest that a high level of participation can have two sides. Greater participation may provide students with more opportunities for interaction and engagement outside the classroom [53], but it may also increase the social demands placed on them. Maintaining multiple relationships and organizational commitments may require considerable time and emotional energy. For some students, these demands could contribute to exhaustion, isolation, or dissatisfaction rather than strengthening their sense of belonging [54].

The results therefore do not suggest that extracurricular participation is inherently harmful. Instead, they point toward the importance of the amount and quality of participation [55]. Meaningful involvement may support student development, whereas excessive commitments may create competing demands that reduce the benefits students are expected to receive [56].

Differences Across Samples

The comparison between the two university samples produced an unexpected pattern. Students from the second institution reported significantly higher Cognitive and Social Engagement, while Academic and Beyond Class Engagement showed differences in the same direction without reaching conventional statistical significance. Affective Engagement was the only dimension for which the groups showed virtually no difference [57].

The two institutions differed in their organizational and educational contexts. The first sample came from a small public university, whereas the second came from a small

private Catholic institution. Institutional identity may be relevant when interpreting the observed differences. A stronger shared institutional identity, common values, and greater opportunities for students to identify with the university community may contribute to stronger engagement in some settings [58].

The higher engagement observed in the second sample should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously [59]. The two groups differed in size, institutional characteristics, and demographic composition. In addition, the inspection of group means suggested that female participants in the second sample contributed substantially to the higher engagement scores. These factors make it difficult to attribute the observed differences to institutional type alone [60].

Future research using larger samples from multiple public and private institutions would be better positioned to determine whether institutional context consistently influences student engagement [61]. Differences in campus culture, religious affiliation, student support services, class size, residential patterns, and opportunities for faculty interaction could all be examined as potential contributors.

Future Research

The findings provide an early contribution to research on excessive student involvement and identify several areas requiring additional investigation [62]. The OIS warrants further validation using larger samples and students from a broader range of institutional settings. Replication across public universities, private universities, community colleges, and institutions with different cultural and organizational characteristics would help establish whether the observed relationships remain consistent [63].

The present data did not identify meaningful differences in the OIS dimensions based on the demographic characteristics examined. This finding should not be interpreted as evidence that demographic factors are unrelated to overinvolvement. The relatively limited sample size and unequal representation across participant groups reduce the ability to detect smaller differences [64].

Future studies could examine whether the relationship between involvement and engagement changes according to employment status, academic workload, year of study, residential status, financial responsibilities, or type of extracurricular activity. Longitudinal research would also be valuable because it could determine whether excessive involvement precedes declining engagement or whether students with lower engagement subsequently become more heavily involved in other activities [65].

Another useful direction would be to identify a threshold at which involvement changes from beneficial to burdensome. Rather than treating involvement as simply high or low [66],

future research could examine the number of hours, number of organizations, type of responsibilities, and perceived importance of each activity. Such an approach may provide a more precise understanding of when participation begins to interfere with academic life.

Supporting Meaningful Student Engagement

The findings have implications for how universities approach student involvement. Providing students with more opportunities to participate is not necessarily sufficient. Institutions should also consider whether those opportunities contribute meaningfully to students' development or simply add another set of responsibilities to already demanding schedules [67].

Student organizations and campus programs may be more effective when they provide experiences that students perceive as purposeful. Leadership opportunities, mentoring, internships, collaborative projects, community-based activities, and professional development can connect participation with skills and experiences that students may not obtain through coursework alone. Such activities can make participation more meaningful while reducing the perception that extracurricular involvement is simply another obligation [68].

The development of adaptability and the capacity to learn from difficult experiences may also be valuable. Students benefit not only from avoiding setbacks but from learning how to respond constructively when difficulties occur. Universities can support this development by creating environments in which students are able to take appropriate risks, make mistakes, receive feedback, and use those experiences for future improvement [69,70].

The findings also reinforce the importance of meaningful face-to-face interaction. In-person university experiences provide opportunities for students to communicate directly with instructors and peers, receive immediate feedback, participate in discussions, and develop relationships within the academic community [71]. These interactions can contribute to learning as well as social connection.

Faculty relationships and peer interaction may be particularly important for students who are trying to establish a stronger connection with their institution [72]. Campus environments that encourage discussion, collaboration, mentoring, and informal interaction can create opportunities for students to develop relationships that support both academic and personal growth.

Universities should therefore seek a balance between encouraging participation and helping students manage the demands created by that participation. Students do not necessarily need more activities; they may need more meaningful experiences and better guidance in selecting commitments that align with their academic goals and personal development [73].

The findings suggest that effective engagement is more likely to emerge when students have opportunities to participate without becoming overwhelmed by competing demands. Authentic campus experiences, supportive faculty relationships, purposeful extracurricular activities, mentoring, and opportunities for personal development may provide a stronger foundation for engagement than simply increasing the number of activities available to students [74,75].

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that student participation and academic engagement should not be treated as interchangeable aspects of university life. Participation in extracurricular activities can provide valuable opportunities for social interaction, personal development, and connection with the institution, but the benefits may become limited when students take on more commitments than they can effectively manage. The negative relationship between Academic Overinvolvement and Academic Engagement is particularly important, as it suggests that excessive commitments may compete with the attention and energy required for coursework. At the same time, the positive relationship between Social Overinvolvement and Beyond Class Engagement shows that extensive participation can remain connected with active involvement outside the classroom. The results support a balanced approach in which universities encourage meaningful participation while helping students recognize manageable levels of commitment. Future research using larger and more diverse samples can further clarify when involvement supports engagement and when competing responsibilities begin to interfere with student's academic experiences.

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